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AUTHOR Prillaman, Douglas
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ABSTRACT

Forty-two principals completed an inventory on attitudes toward mainstreaming handicapped students. Principals responded to each of 40 statements on a five-point scale. Among findings were that one-third supported the special class model as the best placement for handicapped children, yet approximately three quarters believed that normal Ss profit from contact with the handicapped; only four principals believed that mainstreaming would have a negative effect on the self-concept of the handicapped; 75% believed that the placement of handicapped children in regular classes will help teachers grow personally and professionally; 60% stated that if they were parents of handicapped children they would want the child in a regular class most of the day; and 90% believed that mainstreaming would increase the chances for the handicapped to attain a more productive and independent place in society. Findings have implications for planning appropriate coursework and workshops for administrative personnel. (CL)

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ATTITUDES OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS REGARDING THE MAINSTREAMING OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Douglas Prillaman, Ed.D.
Professor of Special Education
School of Education
The College of William and Mary
Williamsburg, Virginia 23185

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During the period 1975 to 1980, conferences, workshops and teacher training institutes were held to acquaint teachers and other school personnel with the policies contained within PL 94-142. Federal and state funds were utilized to a variety of ways in order to provide pre-service and in-service education. Concurrently, educators contributed a variety of opinion papers and research studies on the advantages and disadvantages of the concept of mainstreaming. To date the manuscripts dealing with mainstreaming number in the hundreds, and within the field of exceptional child education, no topic received as much attention as this one has. Only recently has there been a decline in the number of published works on mainstreaming.

A review of research and analysis of reports and conferences focus a great deal of attention on teacher attitudes and opinions regarding mainstreaming. Studies, Carroll (1967); Blatt (1976); Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968), indicate that teacher attitudes affect student self-concept and levels of achievement. Feitler and DuBasik (1978); Vacc and Kirst (1977); and Gickling and Theobald (1975) report non-support of mainstreaming efforts. The type of handicap influence teacher attitude, according to studies by Shotel, Iano and McGettigan (1972) and Guerin (1979). Rumble (1980) reported that previous experiences with handicapped children tend to have a positive effect on teacher attitudes toward mainstreaming.

A sampling of the variety of studies appearing in the literature regarding the issues confronting teachers about the many facets of mainstreaming indicated that teacher concerns have been adequately addressed during the past few years. However, only a small number of reports or manuscripts have devoted time to the attitudes and opinions of school

administrators regarding mainstreaming. It is likely that with the focus on teachers' attitudes we have neglected the concerns and attitudes of the building principal. Likewise, we assume that teachers will be more likely to change their attitudes toward exceptional children if they observe a positive and supportive atmosphere in their school administrators.

LIMITED STUDIES ON ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS IN MAINSTREAMING

A study by Boote (1975) reported on the skills needed by administrators to effectively cope with the problems of mainstreaming. Glass, Christiansen and Christiansen (1982) have reported that some administrators take pride in the fact that all of their exceptional students are in regular classrooms, sometimes at the expense of the mental health of the regular class teacher and the needs of the mainstreamed students. Berry (1975) developed Project Catalyst, a model to be used in assisting principals to create staff development programs which focus on the use of available resources in mainstreamed settings. Sage (1969) conducted workshops to acquaint public school administrators with the role of the special education administrator. His purpose was to demonstrate the need to integrate special education within a total educational scheme, and to emphasize the coordination of regular, special and ancillary services. McGraw (1978) stated that the "key person to introducing any special students into a regular school setting is the principal. Without overt and positive support on the part of the principal, the chances of success (mainstreaming) are greatly diminished" (p. 55).

Public Law 94-142 brought about significant changes in the role definition of the building principal. Budoff (1972) refers to the integration of handicapped students as an administrative and organizational

concern. Leitz (1979) states that

> "One aspect of P.L. 94-142 is that it appears to have blurred many of the traditional boundaries between regular and exceptional education administration, since building principal's decision-making responsibilities were appreciably altered, if not increased by this legislation (p. 81)."

Cocrane and Westling (1977) stated that the principal is in the critical position to provide needed administrative support for successful mainstreaming practices. Finally Klein (1978) suggests that the principal has a major responsibility to exercise leadership since he must assist staff to recognize that maximum integration must examine and include social integration, the analysis of status characteristics which affect social and instructional integration, physical integration, instructional integration and the acknowledgement of the importance of the primary teachers' ability to determine learning and classroom interactions.

During the period September 1978 to August 1980, Prillaman (1980) directed a federally funded grant titled, Inservice Project on Mainstreaming. The project was designed to provide training for regular classroom teachers and principals in order that they would be more knowledgeable and receptive to the concept of mainstreaming. Including the building principal in the overall training project was considered vital for a number of reasons. First, without support of this key professional, any program is likely to fail. Second, it was assured that the principal would serve as a catalyst in sharing and promoting mainstream practices that he received from the project workshops. Third, attendance at project workshops and the sharing of information with one or more of his teachers who were all participants communicated to other faculty members the commitment which the principal had made for the

school. Evaluations of this project by participating principals at the end of the first and second year were very positive. Principals reported that they received worthwhile information which enhanced their mainstream efforts and they expressed the need for a continuation of training which involved building prinicipals as well as regular classroom teachers.

INVENTORY OF ATTITUDES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS ON MAINSTREAMING HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

In preparing for a continuation of the Inservice Project on Mainstreaming for a new group of principals for the 1982-1983 school year, the author surveyed prospective participating principals on their attitudes toward mainstreaming handicapped students. An instrument, Mainstream Planning Inventory (May and Furst, 1977), was sent to fifty school principals randomly selected from seven school divisions. Forty-two responses were received. The following characteristics comprised the group of the forty-two administrators: nineteen females, twenty-three males, average age forty-five; average years of administrative experience, eleven; with females averaging eight years and males fourteen. Sixteen females and nineteen males indicated they had previous experiences working with handicapped students. Six principals (two female, four male) reported no previous experience with the handicapped. One principal did not respond to this question.

The staff of the Inservice Project on Mainstreaming conducted the inventory for two major reasons. First, limited information existed regarding general administrative attitudes about mainstreaming, yet principals were perceived as the primary implementers of the integration of handicapped students into mainstreamed environments. Second, the data gathered from the

inventory would be useful in planning workshops and institutes for principals in forthcoming projects.

The inventory consisted of forty statements. Principals were asked to respond to each statement on a five-point scale (strongly disagree, disagree, no opinion, agree, strongly agree) The results of the inventory are contained in Table 1.

REACTIONS TO THE RESULTS OF THE INVENTORY

Although the number of respondents (N=42) is small, it is likely to be representative of many principals. Evaluation of the data suggest the following:

1. One-third of the principals support the special class model as the best placement for handicapped children, yet many (approximately three-fourths) believe that normal children profit from contact with the handicapped.
2. Three-fourths of the respondents believe teachers will need new techniques and materials in order to effectively teach mainstreamed students.
3. Only four principals believed that mainstreaming would have a negative effect on the self-concept of the handicapped.
4. Fifty percent of the respondents believe handicapped children will be motivated when placed in a regular class.
5. Seventy-five percent of the respondents believe that the placement of handicapped children in regular classes will help teachers grow, both personally and professionally.
6. Approximately ninety percent of the principals stated that mainstreaming will not result in an increase in behavior problems.

7. Eighty percent of the principals do not believe that regular classroom placement for handicapped children will cause social withdrawal

8. Sixty percent of the principals stated if they were parents of a handicapped child, they would want the child in a regular class for most of the school day.

9. Only three principals stated they did not like the challenge of working with the handicapped.

10. Ninety percent of the respondents believe that mainstreaming will increase the chances for the handicapped to attain a more productive and independent place in society.

The data gathered from the Mainstream Planning Inventory has been useful in assessing the attitudes of principals toward mainstreaming as well as toward the handicapped population in general. Concurrently, the data will be utilized in planning appropriate course work and workshops for administrative personnel.

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Table 1

INVENTORY OF ATTITUDES ON MAINSTREAMING HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

N=42

	Strongly disagree	Disagee	No opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Response
1. I think that the full time special education class ir the best placement for handicapped students.	11	18	0	10	2	1
2. I believe that average children will profit from their contact with handicapped students needs.	0	0	1	26	15	
3. Handicapped students are more like normal students than they are different from them.	0	2	3	25	9	3
4. It would be best if handicapped persons would live and work with non-handicapped people.	1	1	1	31	8	
5. As with non-handicapped students, teachers should require handicapped students to share accountability for their learning.	1	1	0	24	16	
6. Having to teach handicapped pupils places an unfair burden on the majority of classroom teachers.	3	23	2	12	1	1
7. Assignment of a handicapped child to a regular classroom is a wise administrative decision.	0	5	9	19	2	7

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Response
8. Most handicapped persons want more affection and praise than other people.	5	22	7	6	1	1
9. Integration of handicapped students will require most teachers to learn and use new techniques and materials.	1	10	2	22	6	1
10. I believe that placing a handicapped student in a typical classroom would damage the student's self-concept.	8	22	5	4	0	3
11 A handicapped child will be motivated to learn in a regular classroom.	1	2	13	22	3	1
12. I am confident that I will be able to make handicapped students feel comfortable in my classroom.	0	1	6	25	9	1
13. Handicapped children should compete with normal children.	2	10	11	17	1	2
14. As a result of placement in a regular classroom, a handicapped child will develop a more positive attitude toward school.	1	4	15	18	2	2
15. The integration of handicapped students into a regular classroom represents an opportunity for the teacher to grow both personally and professionally.	0	1	6	25	9	1

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree	No response
16. In my role as an educator, I have little confidence in my ability to control whether students make scapegoats out of "mainstreamed" handicapped.	15	23	3	0	0	1
17. With a handicapped child in a regular classroom, there will be an increase in the number of behavior problems among the other children.	16	20	2	1	0	1
18. The presence of a handicapped child in a regular classroom will be a cause for complaints from the parents of the other children.	6	21	9	5	0	1
19. Handicapped persons are usually more sensitive than other people.	3	19	11	7	1	1
20. Placement of a handicapped child in a regular classroom will likely result in his becoming socially withdrawn.	10	25	5	0	0	2
21. Handicapped people should not have to compete for jobs with normal persons.	6	21	9	4	0	2
22. A handicapped child will be disruptive in a regular classroom.	11	24	5	0	0	2
23. I think that the integration of handicapped students into the regular classroom will harm the educational achievement of average students.	12	25	2	2	0	1

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree	No response
24. The driving test given to a handicapped person should be more severe than the one given to the non-handicapped.	13	21	4	1	1	2
25. A handicapped child will not respond even to your best teaching efforts.	23	17	1	0	0	1
26. There is not enough time in a teacher's day to deal satisfactorily with the different needs of both average and handicapped pupils.	6	17	4	11	3	1
27. I believe that average students are uncomfortable when they are with children who have obvious physical deformities.	7	22	4	7	0	2
28. Handicapped workers cannot be as successful as other workers.	18	20	3	0	0	1
29. Integration of handicapped students will require most teachers to change the physical arrangements and management of their classrooms to increase the variety of learning environments available to children.	1	17	2	20	2	1
30. A handicapped child will develop a more positive self-concept as a result of being placed in a regular classroom.	3	2	10	25	3	2
31. If I were the parent of a child who had a learning problem, I would want him to be in a regular classroom for most of the school day.	0	7	6	21	6	2

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree	No response
32. A handicapped child will likely form positive social relationships with other children in a regular classroom	0	0	5	27	9	1
33. Handicapped people usually do not make much of a contribution to society.	18	20	3	0	0	1
34. Handicapped persons don't want any more sympathy than other people	0	0	4	28	9	1
35. I generally look forward to the challenge of working with handicapped children.	1	2	4	27	6	2
36. The experience of being in a regular classroom will increase the chances of a handicapped child attaining a more productive and independent place in society.	0	1	6	30	4	1
37. I believe that average students need the experience of being in contact with handicapped students in an academic setting.	0	2	6	27	6	1
38. Given my current understanding, I believe that "mainstreaming" will benefit me as a teacher as well as all children.	0	3	8	26	4	1
39. If I were the parent of a child who had an emotional problem I would want him to be in a regular classroom for most of the school day.	4	14	7	15	1	3

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree	No response
40. Integration of handicapped students will require most teachers to use classroom time differently and perhaps more efficiently than is not the case.	3	4	7	25	2	1